LONDON-DOCKS.

THE Merchants of London had, for a Series of Years, experienced great Inconveniences from the small Extent of the Legal Quays, which are only 1464 Feet in Length, and which were appointed in 1666, on the rebuilding the City after the Fire of London, at which Time the Trade of the Port of London was comparatively very small *.

Several Meetings of the principal Merchants and Traders were holden, and a Committee was appointed, to take into Consideration the State of the Legal Quays, and to make Reports, from Time to Time, to General Meetings.

This Committee were of Opinion, that, notwithstanding the Indulgence given by Sufference to land at private Wharfs in the present increased and yet increasing State of the Commerce of the Port of London, other Measures were necessary to give such Accommodation to the Trade as might insure its Continuance, and not interrupt that progressive Increase of the national Commerce which might reasonably be expected, if the Inconveniences of the Port of London were removed.

They found these Inconveniences to arise, not only from a Want of sufficient Wharf-room at which loaded Ships might be discharged without the Intervention of Lighters, in Cases where such Discharge would be most expedient, but also from the very crowded State of the River at those Seasons of the Year when the trading Ships were returning in great Numbers from their foreign Voyages.

THE COMMITTEE THEREFORE REPORTED,

That the Formation of Wet Docks, with Wharfs on their Borders, in Wapping, would best tend to remove the many Inconveniences which the Trade of the Port of London now laboured under; which Opinion being confirmed by a General Meeting of Merchants, and the Com-

* £.
The Imports of 1700 were valued at 4,785,538.
The Exports of 1700 . . . . . 5,387,787.
The Imports of 1792 . . . . . 12,072,674.
The Exports of 1792 . . . . . 14,742,516.

mittee

mittee having stated, on the Authority of actual Surveys, made by experienced Surveyors, and on that of the Corporation of the Trinity-House, that their Plan was practicable; it was proposed, that a Subscription should be entered into for raising a Fund to defray the Expence of forming Wet Docks at Wapping, completeing the Works connected with them, and cutting a Canal from Blackwall to the Eastern Boundaries of the Wet Docks; by which the circuitous and inconvenient Navigation round the Isle of Dogs might be avoided.

A Subscription was immediately entered into, and the Sum of £. 800,000 was subscribed; and it was proposed that Application should be made to Parliament to incorporate the Subscribers; who, under the usual Privileges of a Corporate Body, should undertake and complete the Object of the Subscription.

A Bill is now prepared for this Purpose, from the Limitations in which, it is hoped, it will be obvious, that the great Object of the Subscribers is, to secure to themselves and their Successors in the Commerce of the Port of London, Accommodations necessary to its Support and Increase; and that their Undertaking tends to secure and improve the Revenues of Custom and Excise, by preventing a System of Robbery and Smuggling, which now prevails to a Degree, which nothing but a repeated Experience of its Effects could render credible; and that, as they aim at no exclusive Privilege, nor attack any chartered Right, they may hope for the Countenance of the Legislature.

The Objects of the Bill are:

To form the Subscribers into a Corporate Body, with the usual Privileges of a Corporation.

That their Stock shall be saleable and transferable.

That no Proprietor's Estate shall be liable to any Call or other Demand beyond the Amount of his Stock.

That the Stock shall not be liable to foreign Attachment.

That

That the Dividend shall not exceed the Profits, and shall, at no Time, exceed 10 per Cent. per Annum ; and that, when the Dividends shall amount to that Rate, the River and Dock Duties shall be reduced.

That all Questions shall, if required, be determined by Ballot.

That the Election for Directors shall be Annual, and by Ballot.

That, if the Capital raised shall not be found sufficient to complete the Works, the Company may be impowered to borrow a limited Sum, and assign the Rates as a Security.

That the Value of the Premises to be purchased shall be settled by a Jury, unless agreed on by the Parties.

That a Rate (with some Exceptions) shall be paid by Ships coming into, and going from, the Port of London.

That the Rates shall be deemed a Port-Charge.

That the Wharfs shall be made Legal Quays.

Merchant-Seaman's Office,
2d February, 1796.

Printed at the Philanthropic Reform, St. George's Fields.

London

CASE

OF THE

SUBSCRIBERS

FOR RAISING A FUND

FOR FORMING

WET DOCKS

AT WAPPING.

2nd February 1796